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The Peril of Complacency in Our Nation

CHRISTIAN leaders and other enlightened people have been much concerned lest the hysteria and fear, which is indicated by the term "McCarthyism," should destroy all dissent in this country and reduce our culture to an uninteresting and uncreative conformity. We do not deny the danger in these tendencies, but it seems that preoccupation with this peril to our national ethos has obscured an even more pervasive danger, that of religious and moral complacency. We may not be thinking independently because of our fears; but it is even more ominous that we are not thinking critically about ourselves at all; and are in danger of sinking into a sodden mass of national complacency and self-esteem.

The temptations to such complacency are many; and only a few derive from political persecution. One temptation lies in our obvious power in the world community; and the prosperity of our economic life. It is difficult for all fortunate people and classes to resist the conclusion that their fortune and their power must be regarded as the reward of their virtues. Usually the virtues ostensibly rewarded are those of thrift and diligence. But we add another social virtue to these traditionally respected ones. We assume that we are so fortunate because we are so "free." The business community constantly beats the tom toms on the favorite theme that our productivity is greater than that of any nation because we are "free." We do not usually mean that the basic democratic rights are best preserved among us, though we are not above that pretension. We usually mean that our economy is subject to fewer restraints than that of any nation. This is indeed true, though it may be a question how much the freedom of our economy is the consequence, rather than the cause of our productivity. The more meager the social fund to be divided, the greater is the interest in the just division of the fund. This accounts for the fact that the poorer nations of Europe, though boasting of many democratic achievements which we have not attained, have more restraints upon their economic life than we. In this matter we ought to heed the advice in Deuteronomy: "Understand therefore, that the Lord

thy God giveth thee this good land to possess, not because of thy righteousness, for thou art a stiff-necked people." There is no greater temptation for a fortunate nation than to transmute its "uncovenanted mercies" into proofs and rewards of its alleged virtues.

The other temptation to self-esteem derives from the fact that we are embattled with a foe who embodies all the evils of a demonic religion. We are by comparison more righteous than our foe, even as we were more righteous than the Nazi tyranny. We will probably be at sword's point with this foe for generations to come. It is difficult to discern the judgments of God upon a person or nation when that person or nation is engaged in mortal combat with an evil foe. All conflicts make for self-righteousness among the disputants. Disputants to a conflict may, in fact, be regarded as constitutionally self-righteous. But if the foe is obviously evil and when he embodies a creed in its most consistent form, which, in its less consistent form had proved to be an instrument of criticism in our own world, the temptation to discount all criticism is very great. Thus we are in danger of sinking into a mood of self-congratulation which must be, as indeed it is, a trial to all of our friends, no matter how grateful they may be that our strength is dedicated to the cause of freedom.

The distinguished English historian, Herbert Butterfield, in his recent book: *Christianity, Diplomacy and War* has gone so far as describing the present situation as a conflict between "two organized systems of self-righteousness." We may be offended that he makes no distinction between the quality of self-righteousness among us and that which is encouraged by an explicitly idolatrous religion. Indeed, he is too prone to equate the evils on both sides. But he has at least given us a glimpse of the effect of our national self-esteem upon our most intimate ally, Britain.

Ideally, it is the function of a religion which possesses any prophetic dimension to mediate an ultimate divine judgment upon men and nations who should otherwise sink into a morass of self-esteem, if they were not disturbed by a word of God. The

Christian church must therefore regard it as one of its most important missions to disturb the mood of national self-congratulation into which our nation is sinking. If the church is to perform this task it must know however that the "prophetic" mission to the nation does not come easily or automatically to the church. Religion qua religion is naturally idolatrous, accentuating, rather than diminishing, the self-worship of men and nations, by assuring them of an ultimate sanction for their dearest desires. Insofar as our congregations are merely religious communities in which an uncritical piety is nourished, they also do no more than to mix patriotic self-congratulation with the worship of God. It requires both courage and astuteness to penetrate the armor of the nation's self-righteousness. But above all it requires knowledge of and devotion to the one true God who declares to even the most righteous of nations: "*You only have I chosen; therefore will I visit you with your iniquities.*"

R. N.

Editorial Notes

James Reston has called attention to the extraordinary fact that at the moment when fear of executive abuse of power is causing many of our people to call for the Bricker amendment, a fundamental change in foreign policy is being projected without any debate which would necessarily give to the executive the responsibility to make almost instantaneous and probably irrevocable decisions concerning war and peace. The new foreign policy announced by Mr. Dulles and embodied in some of the provisions of the administration's budget would substitute atomic reprisals against the centers of the Communist world for limited forms of resistance to Communist aggression at particular points on the boundary of that world. It is easy enough to see why this new policy has been adopted. It promises to be much cheaper. It also enables us to control our own action, instead of leaving the place of action to the Communists to determine. It enables us to plan what may be an effective deterrent to Communist aggression no matter how remote the location of that aggression may be from our own centers of power.

There are some very important objections to this new policy. One is that it does concentrate the responsibility for what might prove to be the most fateful decisions in modern history in the hands of the President and a very few advisers. This means that our allies whose fate would also be at stake might have almost no voice in the decision. But even more important, this policy, as many critics have pointed out, eliminates the idea of a *limited*

use of military power. The result would be that almost any episode might be made the occasion of universal atomic war. There has always been the hope that atomic weapons might be avoided in another war but this policy destroys that hope completely. Moreover, there is a guarantee that those weapons would be used by our country whether or not they were first used by another.

This change of policy may well be as important as any issue, perhaps more important than any, which has been discussed in the Churches. But so far there has been complete silence on the subject. It may be granted that the Churches cannot make decisions about the technical problems of military strategy but surely they can raise questions about the possible consequences of this new policy.

* * *

The controversy over the Bricker amendment has produced an alarming division among Americans. Those who have responsibility for foreign policy and those who are experts on foreign policy seem to be in general agreement that the amendment would seriously cripple us as a nation in our foreign relations. Yet, the American Bar Association favors it and a large majority of the senators were in the early stages on record for it.

The issues involved are so technical that the debate as to exactly what the amendment would prevent are as important as the arguments over the desirability of preventing what anyone, including Senator Bricker, intends to have it prevent. The one sure thing that would result would be a very much greater inhibition in making any agreements with other nations. If the Bricker amendment should become part of the Constitution we would become less able than we are to act decisively or to make reliable commitments. For the most powerful nation in the free world to be hamstrung in this way would play into the hands of the Communists who know no such constitutional inhibitions. This is ironical because the supporters of the Bricker amendment are the very people who are most likely to be bitten by the hysterical type of anti-Communism. There are reasons for recognizing the possibility of serious error in making executive agreements as there are for recognizing the possibility that both the administration and two thirds of the Senate might be wrong in regard to treaties. But the risks of being wrong are often less serious than the risks of inaction. Checks and balances have their place but already our Constitution too often creates dangerous stalemates. The Bricker amendment would be one more factor that would have this effect. The President surely deserves our support on this issue.

J. C. B.

Looking Toward Evanston*

HENRY P. VAN DUSEN

THE Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches which is scheduled to convene on the campus of Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, on August 12, 1954, promises to be the most important Christian assemblage ever held on the North American continent. The purpose of this paper is to stress some of the *problems* in holding the World Council Assembly in the United States next summer, and then to suggest something of the *promise* of the Evanston meeting.

I

The first fact to be noted is that this will be the first major world Christian conference ever held in the United States. It is surprising, at first thought, that, in spite of the preeminent leadership of American churchmen in every respect and at every stage of the modern movement of Christian cooperation and unity, none in the succession of great world church assemblies, which are familiar to us by their place names—Edinburgh, 1910, Stockholm and Lausanne, Jerusalem, Oxford and Edinburgh, 1937, Madras, Amsterdam, 1939, Oslo, Whitby, Amsterdam, 1948, Bangkok, Willingen, Lund, Kotoyan and Lucknow—has met in the United States. Evanston presents the *first* opportunity of this nation to serve as host to the World Christian Movement. However, on no previous occasion in the past half-century would it have been as difficult for Christian guests from all over the world to come to an ecumenical church assemblage in the United States or for us to receive them.

We have heard a great deal latterly about a mounting antagonism toward the United States in many parts of the world. It would be more accurate to define it as a deepening misgiving. It is a misgiving regarding the wisdom and trustworthiness of our nation's policies in the exercise of its overwhelming influence in world affairs. This influence is the determinative fact of the world's life today. We must not take time to examine the evidence of that mistrust, or to reassure ourselves as to its lack of sound basis. We must recognize it as a *fact*—weighty and widely held.

There is one particular aspect of this sense of misgiving, which, if we are to prepare ourselves for

Evanston cannot be passed over. There are many in our country who look with favor upon the succession of Congressional investigations and related activities, so prominent a feature of American domestic life at the present time. There are some within our churches—who, while they regret certain of the methods employed, feel that these investigations and activities are in the national interest.

We should understand clearly that, while such views are held within the United States and even within the American churches, they are almost wholly absent throughout the rest of the world. While circling that world a year ago, I visited over twenty countries on four continents, and talked intimately with some hundreds of leaders of those nations—mainly churchmen but also statesmen, educators and ordinary folk. I read their newspapers and magazines, and took soundings of the prevailing viewpoints of millions of their citizens. I did not meet one—I did not *hear* of one—not one—who regards this current American phenomenon with other than dismay. To cite a single instance, the "purging" of the United States Libraries of Information abroad brought discredit upon what were, by all odds, the finest and most effective instruments for commending this nation to other peoples which have been devised under government sponsorship. The visitation through the countries of Europe last spring of two young representatives of a Congressional Committee Chairman has left a malodorous trail of adolescent ignorance and ineptitude in every country of Europe. The flooding of the international press wires with reports of the latest inquiry, investigation, inquisition has put this aspect of our national life in the forefront of world attention and in the consciousness of every informed person abroad. President Eisenhower's brother has not exaggerated either the character or the gravity of this problem in its unfavorable effect upon our country's discharge of its overwhelmingly complex and testing world responsibilities, and upon the confidence in the United States among friendly peoples overseas.

To be sure, the delegates to the Evanston Assembly will come as *church* representatives, charged to center their discussions upon the concerns of the World Christian Movement. But they are, also, citizens of particular nations, their outlooks inevitably colored by the assumptions and prejudices prevalent in the countries and areas from which they come. It must be frankly admitted that not a few of them—including some with largest knowledge of the world and even of this country—look forward to

* This is the first in a series of articles concerning The Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches scheduled to convene in Evanston, Illinois, in August of this year. Articles on all six commissions dealing with the implications of Christian Hope, will appear in coming issues. Dr. Van Dusen's article describes the scope, content, and purpose of the coming assembly.

the location of a great world Christian assemblage in the heart of the United States with apprehension. They will land on our shores next summer, not with the eager expectations which we would wish, but with *their minds* troubled by misgivings.

These misgivings, to be sure, are mainly political rather than spiritual in character. But there are also *misgivings regarding our understanding and practice of Christian Faith*. These have recently been set forth by one of the most universally revered of all European church leaders, Bishop Eivind Berggrav of Norway, in an article captioned "Why Europeans Fear America." He begins by noting, "The *general* fears which Europeans have of America [those to which I have just referred] are widely known. I shall rather consider those which European Christians have as they look at the churches and church life in the U.S.A." He then sets down six such "fears," making clear that he is reporting the reactions of fellow churchmen rather than his own. Here they are:

- "1. American Christianity is too often institutional rather than personal.
- "2. American Christians appear rather self-assured about their own efficiency, so that God sometimes seems to be about as much dependent upon them as they on God.
- "3. The American churches occasionally appear to have two altars, one for the dollar and another for God.
- "4. American Christianity often looks confused, lacking a truly credal structure.
- "5. American Christianity looks very much divided even within the several official denominations. . . . Such divisions often appear to be determined more by sentiment than motivated by sound theological reasoning. . . . Americans seem to be more governed by their feelings than by their reasoning and so sometimes give us the impression of being unreasonable.
- "6. The outlook of American Christianity often looks to us rather earth-bound, expecting the fulfillment of God's Kingdom here on earth—one might say, expecting its realization in the U. S. A. . . ."

It is salutary that we should see ourselves in so clear and sharp a mirror, placed before our eyes by so sympathetic and friendly an observer, before we confront him and those whose views he reports face-to-face. Next summer, the leadership of the World Christian Movement will have the opportunity to become personally acquainted with our church life for the first time.

If there has never been a time when it has been so difficult for our guests to come from all over the world to this country for a World Christian Assemblage, there has never been a time (since the first beginnings of Ecumenical Christianity) when it was

as difficult for us to welcome a great World Christian gathering. For our own country is sadly rifted over issues which, indirectly or directly, might cause embarrassment as we seek to fulfill the role of hosts. Our embarrassments are epitomized in the attitudes and activities of two men, well-known throughout the Christian world as "the two American Macs." One is Dr. Carl McIntyre, creator and director of the so-called "American Council of Churches" and "International Council of Christian Churches"—titles as close as possible to, and therefore as readily confused as possible with the National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council; the other is Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin.

Dr. McIntyre is firmly convinced that the National and the World Council of Churches are not of Christ whose name they bear and whose cause they exist to serve, but of the Devil. He will probably do all in his power to discredit the World Council in advance of the Evanston meeting, and to divide the attitude of American Christians, which should be one of heartiest welcome and keenest expectation. If he continues a tactic, by now well-established in his practice, he and his colleagues will utilize every facility and device of modern mass-communication to prejudice the public mind against what the World Council is and may be expected to say and do. There is evidence that the effectiveness of such efforts is far less than is often supposed, and is steadily diminishing. But the American mind is peculiarly credulous, ill-trained in sifting fact from charge, reality from rumor; and there are, sad-to-say, American newspapers and American commentators more attracted by sensation than committed to truth. At the least, such activities possess a "nuisance dis-value" out of proportion to their real importance; they might succeed in creating the appearance of an attitude far less unanimous in its expectant cordiality than that which we would desire, and which alone would be appropriate to hosts to so notable a gathering of the Protestant and Orthodox leadership of the world.

Our embarrassments spring again from the very facts which are creating such disquiet among our friends overseas. A nation whose attention is so preoccupied with the afore-mentioned questions creates a difficult atmosphere in which to welcome a great ecumenical conference in the summer of 1954.

The World Council is a fellowship of Churches from the *whole world*. It rejoices to embrace within its membership churches drawn from peoples on every continent and of almost every political allegiance, churches from within the area of Communist domination as well as outside it. In a day when the peoples of mankind are divided, it has been given to the Church of Christ in this great Council to hold the Christian leadership of those peoples within a

living community of common faith and allegiance. With due recognition of the greatness of the United Nations, in which we all believe, *this* Council is the only lively symbol to mankind of the *community* of nations which Christians believe to be God's ultimate purpose. Delegates to the Evanston Assembly will come from member-churches throughout the world; indeed, the World Council has all along firmly resolved that it could hold its Assembly only where their unconstrained presence is assured. It is *our task* to make sure, not only that no unreasonable impediment blocks or hinders their attendance, but also that they are welcomed wholeheartedly into a Christian fellowship within the Body of Christ which knows no divisive distinction of Jew or Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free.

One might think that these were troubles enough. But there is another possible source of difficulty, which arises not from factors outside the World Council, but from differences of outlook and conviction within its own membership.

The topic chosen more than three years ago as the "Main Theme" of the Evanston Assembly is "Christ: The Hope Of The World." I suppose that the anticipation which arises spontaneously in the minds of most of us is that this theme would be developed along at least two lines:

1. A reasoned and tempered restatement of what Christians are entitled to hope for the future of human society.
2. A strong reaffirmation of the Christian assurance of eternal life, on which there has appeared marked uncertainty among many church people in recent years.

But, as the theme has been discussed in World Council circles over the past three years, it has become apparent that the "Christian Hope" signifies different expectations and assurances to different groups within the World Council's constituency. For many, Christian Hope is inextricably involved with, if it is not wholly exhausted by, the *anticipation of Christ's return in power and in glory to conclude and fulfill history and usher in the Kingdom of God*. This anticipation held a large (if not all-controlling) place in the hopes of the first Christians, and echoes through the creeds of the Church in such statements as "He shall come again, with glory, to judge both the quick and the dead," and in the recurrence in many hymns of the phrase, "until His Coming again." In their eyes, this is an essential, a central article of Christian belief, with respect to which American Christians are especially vague if not actually unsure. Thus Bishop Berggrav concludes his list of European "fears" concerning American Christians on that note:

"6. The outlook of American Christianity often looks

to us rather earthbound, expecting the fulfillment of God's Kingdom here on earth—one might even say, expecting its realization in the U. S. A. And it seems less concerned with the second coming of Christ. . . ."

This is not the occasion, nor is there time, to go fully or adequately into these questions, to many of us so strange, obscure, and baffling. The heart of the matter is the degree to which expectation of Christ's return to bring a terminus to human history controls and determines every aspect of Christian hope.

It rather looks as though intelligent American Christians who hope to take a responsible part in Evanston preparations would have to come to terms with a phrase almost as unfamiliar to their ears as was the term "Ecumenical" twenty or even ten years ago. It is the word "Eschatological." Not only must they accustom their ears to the sound of the word; they must give their minds and hearts to the attempt to comprehend it and why it holds so decisive, so pivotal a place in the Christian hope of fellow-Christians in many lands of many traditions.

Many might consider what has been said a disproportionate emphasis upon the *problems* in connection with the Evanston Assembly. Let me stress the fact that most of them are problems which *might* arise, not which are certain to do so. I hope, and believe, that many of them will never materialize in such a fashion as to need to concern most of us. I have ventured to set them before you so fully lest ignorance of the *problems* should in any way compromise fulfillment of the *promise* of Evanston. It is this—the *promise*—which should claim our major attention and mould our expectancy.

II

The promise of Evanston. One remembers the slow, stumbling, largely unnoted developments in Christian fellowship, cooperation and unity all through the Nineteenth Century—reversing the tides of history which, in the previous eighteen centuries, had swept Christians apart into ever more numerous, separate and often antagonistic fragmentations of the one Body of Christ. The acceleration of that process of coming together since the epoch-making World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh in 1910; the enormous stimulus to advance resulting from the tragic divisions of Christians by political enmities in the First World War; the history of the two parent-movements of the World Council—the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and the World Conference on Faith and Order followed. The resolve of World Christian leadership, under the inspired initiative of the late Archbishop William Temple, to join these two earlier ecumenical movements into a more inclusive World Council of

Churches with a more comprehensive mandate to speak and act on behalf of most of non-Roman Christendom; the projecting of the World Council came on the eve of the Second World War. Its amazing survival, enlargement and solidification through the agonized formative decade of the Second War, and its immediate aftermath (when the World Council was still technically only "in process of formation" and its members were separated again by the conflicts of nations), with the formal birth of the World Council at the great First Assembly at Amsterdam in 1948 led to the heartening advance, in catholicity of membership and in scope and effectiveness of program, during these past five years. There have been parallel movements through the past century and a half of ever closer, ever more significant, collaboration in the Christian World Mission, and in the life of the Younger Christian Churches of Asia and Africa and Latin America and Oceania born of the Christian World Mission. That whole magnificent story—in the view of many sober historians, the most glorious chapter in the Nineteen Centuries' chronicle of Christ's Church in the world—Archbishop Temple has summarized in words so often repeated: "the great new fact of our era—this world-wide Christian fellowship, this ecumenical movement—one great ground of hope for the coming days."

All this, the Evanston Assembly will presuppose and build upon. Indeed, a simple definition of the task of the Assembly is to appraise what has thus far been achieved, and to project what shall be attempted in the years ahead. The deliberations of the Assembly will divide sharply into two parts, to be carried forward side-by-side throughout the more than a fortnight of its meetings.

The first is concerned with the work of the World Council itself. It must never be forgotten that the Assembly is, in the first instance, a legislative body, composed of those (some 600 of them) who have been officially chosen by their respective Churches to voice the convictions and desires, the concerns and hopes, of those member-churches as to what *their* World Council should be and do. About half of the time available will be devoted to these purposes. The conclusions reached and decisions taken are not likely to bulk large in press accounts. But it may be questioned whether just here is not the greatest significance of Evanston, as it is certainly the primary obligation of those who attend.

But, as is always the case when representatives of the Churches gather from the ends of the earth, it is unthinkable that the Assembly should confine its attention to its own business, vitally important as that is. Both the member churches—and the world, so far as the world is alive to the Church and its voice—will expect the leaders of Christendom to

seek to make themselves attentive to what *God* must be intending to say to them and through them, on the great issues in mankind's life in the year 1954. This latter obligation will command a full half of the Assembly's time and attention.

It is planned that this part of its program should advance by two stages, timed roughly to occupy the two successive weeks of its meeting. In the first week, the entire membership will divide into some fifteen groups of about 50 persons each, *all* groups to focus upon the same theme—the so-called "Main Theme": Christ: The Hope Of The World—building upon the careful preparatory labors of the Advisory Commission embodied in its three Reports, two of which have already received wide circulation and stimulated much discussion; the third and final Report will be distributed to the delegates well in advance, but available to the wider public only when the Assembly convenes. This is a new device in ecumenical gatherings—conceived in much hope of *immediate* fulfillment at Evanston and its aftermath; and hope of fruitfulness to Christian Churches throughout the world in their responsibility to discover and declare the Christian Hope for men and their societies.

In the second week, the entire membership will be re-divided into six Commissions, dealing with the implications of the Christian Hope for six of the most vital issues in the church and the world—a familiar method, tried and tested by most earlier ecumenical conferences.

The first topic is: *Our Oneness in Christ and Our Disunity as Churches*. It will attempt to move one step further forward toward the resolving of those differences in the *Faith and Order* of the Churches which are responsible for their divisions, building upon study which has been steadily in process for a quarter of a century. This subject claims an immediate response from those outside as well as within the churches; nothing is more obvious than the contradiction between Christians' *professed* unity in Christ and their *actual* separation into multitudinous Confessions and denominations.

The next topic—*The Mission of the Church to Those Outside Her Life*—has in view especially the estrangement of the Churches from vast numbers among the *working-classes* and "*intellectuals*"; but, also, the task of the Churches to carry their Gospel to the tens of millions in Asia, Africa and elsewhere who know nothing of Christian Faith: i.e., *Evangelism* including *Christian missions*.

The Responsible Society in a World Perspective is a topic which has stood near the center of attention of ecumenical thought since the founding of the World Council; indeed, much earlier. What, if any, is the bearing of Christian Faith upon the complex and intractable problems of economic life

and the social order? What, if any, is the specific role of the Churches with respect to those issues?

Ever since the last War, the *Commission of the Churches on International Affairs*, sponsored jointly by the World Council and its companion body, the International Missionary Council has enabled Christian opinion to exert a not inconsiderable influence on certain crucial international issues and crises. These matters will be reviewed under the caption: *Christians in the Struggle for World Community*.

Problems of *Racial and Ethnic Tensions* have not, heretofore, commanded a special place in World Council deliberations. At Evanston, they will furnish a fifth topic. The preparatory Commission has included churchmen—both white and colored—from such areas of acute racial tension as South Africa and the southern United States; but the particular problems of these areas will be seen within the wider context of ethnic diversities and racial antagonisms throughout the world.

The sixth and final topic takes cognizance of the fact that over 90% of all Christians are lay people—men and women; that they spend the major part of their waking hours in their jobs, whatever those jobs may be; that the Churches have very largely failed to give them guidance or support in the baffling ethical dilemmas which confront many Christians in their occupations; and also, that, if the Churches expect to exert a significant impact upon the secular world, it must be exerted, *not* through the clergy but through the laity; *not* by church services or declarations but by the actual decisions taken by lay Christians where they work. This topic—*The Laity: The Christian in His Vocation*—will, no doubt, strike many as an innovation for a church congress; and will make an especially strong appeal to many who might otherwise view a church assembly with indifference if not disdain and to many of you.

The Evanston Assembly will cover a wide range of subjects—from the most abstruse and obscure issues of theology, *through* the Churches' main task of Evangelism, and the bearing of Christian Faith upon various areas of public life, *to* the most concrete and harassing perplexities of individual Christians in their daily work.

Lastly, what can we say about the *meaning* of Evanston for those of us who may not be privileged to take a direct part in its meetings? I should like to suggest this *meaning*, also in terms of promise, of *hope*.

The forthcoming Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston offers to the United Church Women of America an unprecedented and unsurpassed opportunity to lift before *all* the church

people of the nation the reality of cooperative Christianity, of ecumenical Christendom, and to claim their intelligent and active participation in it. By a strange paradox, so typical of the illogical structure of ecclesiastical organizations, neither the National Council of Churches nor the United Church Women will have official status in the Assembly, except fraternal; membership in the World Council consists solely of denominational Churches; they alone can appoint voting delegates. Actually, the World Council is, very largely, the reality of our own National Council projected on a world scale. Indeed the relationship is even more intimate. In fact, it was the experience and structure of the American Federal Council of Churches which furnished the pattern for the World Council. More than that, it was cooperative Christianity within nations, and especially within the United States, which pioneered the pathway down which the World Council has advanced. And, in that development, United Church Women have exercised a vital role. To tell the story of the World Council, to claim attention for its Assembly, among the churchwomen of America is to tell some part, an important part, of the story and to enlist support for the cause which is closest to your own hearts.

Secondly, some of the issues (concerning the National Council of Churches) which have troubled American churchmen most in recent years, have caused much agony, as well as much exhilaration and satisfaction of mind and heart. They are the vital issues within the life of the World Council also. For example, the *role of non-institutional groups and individuals* within a body grounded firmly upon existing denominational structures,—the opportunity for free and prophetic thought and leadership in ecclesiastical counsels so strongly impregnated with tradition and conservatism,—and the place of special membership and bodies in the larger whole.

But, third and last, the Evanston Assembly presents the call not only to a new and far stronger participation in the present reality of Christ's World-wide Church, but also—and more important, to a fresh and far profounder apprehension of the Faith by which alone that Church can truly live and give life.

No one who contemplates our world in these tragic days—and then ponders what *must be* God's yearning intention and desire for that world—and who recalls what He has been pleased to bring to pass in and through united Churches of Christ in these latter years, can doubt that the Evanston Assembly holds already in His Purpose mighty gifts of grace and power and HOPE—not our hope but His HOPE. Let us join heart and thought and resolve—and prayer—that that Purpose shall not fail of fulfillment.

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CHURCH NEWS AND NOTES

Communists Admit Failure To Win Over Christians

Berlin (RNS) — Intensive efforts of Communist groups in the Soviet Zone to win Christians over to the Communist line have had no success. This was admitted here by Gerald Goetting, general secretary of the Communist-controlled East German Christian Democratic Union.

Addressing party functionaries, Mr. Goetting said that the education of the people along Communist lines "is being made difficult by the adherence of wide Christian circles to certain ideological systems and social theories to which they feel associated by convention." "It is an open secret," he added, "that in some Christian layers the fear of a third world war is not as great as the fear of Communism, a fact cleverly nourished by Western propagandists."

The East German C.D.U. recently renewed its attempts to spread the Communist line among Soviet Zone Christians and win clergymen over to cooperation with the government. The group, originally a branch of the West German party of the same name headed by Chancellor Konrad Adenauer, now is primarily an organization which attempts to rally Christians behind the Communist program.

Repeated attempts to set up a collaborationist movement of "patriotic" clergymen similar to those in other Communist countries have failed in East Germany.

Foreign Ministers Get Message From Church Leader

Berlin (RNS) — A prominent American churchman told the Big Four foreign ministers here that world public opinion would judge their conference not only on specific results achieved but on its spirit of sincerity and good will.

Dr. O. Frederick Nolde of Philadelphia, director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, expressed this view in a letter to each of the conferees: U. S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, French Foreign Minister Georges Bidault and Russian Foreign Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov.

Dr. Nolde assured the diplomats that Christians of the world were praying for wisdom and understanding on the part of the conferees. The peoples of the world do not have "excessive expectations," he said. They will judge the conference "only partly on the basis of the specific results which it achieves."

Dr. Nolde flew here as the conference opened to offer "tangible evidence of the deep interest and concern" of Christians and Churches represented in the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council. The Commission Dr. Nolde directs is an agency of the two ecumenical bodies.

We wish to thank our subscribers once more for their response to our request for names of potential subscribers. One thousand additional names have reached our office since November. We have begun to circulate this list already. Our past experience has been that names suggested by our subscribers are the most fruitful for extending the circulation of our journal.

Index, Volume XIII

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